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DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICAL ART
ACCESSIONS OF 1914

GEOMETRIC VASES

ONE of the most remarkable phenomena in the history of Greek art is the successive appearance of two styles so different in ideals and methods as the "Minoan" or "Mycenaean" and the classical Greek. The third and second millennia B. C. witnessed the rise and fall of the former art, with its love of impetuous movement and its keen interest in animals and plants; during the first millennium B. C. classical Greek art worked out its ideals and passed through the various stages of its development, making for its chief study the representation of man as a type of ideal beauty. Between the fall of the Mycenaean and the rise of the classic Greek art are a few centuries, from about 1100 to 700 B. C., which form, so to speak, a bridge between the two. In the art of that period we find some remnants of Mycenaean art and we can trace the beginnings of the later Greek art; but neither the echoes of the past nor the promise of the future are very distinct, and these centuries have not inappropriately been called the dark ages of Greece. However, though there is none of the vitality and originality that pervade both other epochs of Greek artistic effort, this geometric period—as it has been

named from the geometric character of its ornaments—has a definite merit of its own. In the decoration of his vases the artist displayed a wonderful feeling for design. He evolved a large repertoire of ornaments, admirably adapted to his purpose of filling the various surfaces of his vases; and if he was content to repeat these ornaments over and over again, he at least showed

great ingenuity in the almost infinite combinations he devised. And there is another important contribution that the geometric potter made to the development of Greek art. He reintroduced what had been attempted at the very end of the Mycenaean period—the representation of human beings on pottery. Once introduced, such representations occupied the attention of the Greek vase-painter more and more, until, from the sixth century onward, they became his exclusive theme.



FIG. 1. VASE, ATHENIAN GEOMETRIC
EIGHTH CENTURY B.C.

The Museum has in the last few years acquired a number of typical geometric vases, which have given a good idea of this style. The two vases purchased last year surpass all these in importance. They are magnificent examples of the colossal grave-vases produced in Attica toward the end of the geometric period, the eighth century B. C., and they display this art at its height. Few museums have had the good fortune to acquire whole specimens of this type, though a

number own fragments. The two examples acquired by us are among the best and the most complete that have survived. They stand 4 ft. 3 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (1.305 m.) and 3 ft. 11 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (1.216 m.) high respectively, and are of the so-called krater shape, with two double handles and high foot (figs. 1 and 2). The foot of one only is ancient; that of the other, as now shown, is restored; its original foot, though preserved, not having yet arrived in this country.

Such vases were used, as we now know, as monuments on graves. They were usually hollow at the bottom—as is the case in our examples—so that libations for the dead could be poured into them. Vases of this type were first found in the "Dipylon" cemetery outside Athens. They have therefore generally been called "Dipylon" ware, though the better name is Athenian geometric, that is, the Athenian variety of the geometric fabric. They constitute the earliest pottery produced in Athens. Our two examples are known to have been found in Attica.

The entire surfaces of these enormous vases are covered with decorations, almost the whole stock of geometric ornaments being represented. The chief interest, however, centers in the figured scenes, which consist on both vases of a funeral, with the deceased laid out on a bier, surrounded by his wife and children and by mourning

women tearing their hair. Warriors on foot and mounted on chariots, often carrying large shields, form the subject of two other friezes on one vase and of one on the other. These representations are very crude. There is no attempt to study the human figure as it is, or to solve the problems presented by bodies in motion; there is no knowledge of perspective, and this

leads to surprising results; for the artist, even when representing his subjects in profile, is naively anxious to depict what he could not really see. All the legs of teams of horses are conscientiously drawn side by side, and their heads one below the other; the two wheels of chariots both appear on the same side; the further leg of a seated human being is drawn above the other so that it seems to grow out of the waist; and so on. But we must not judge these pictures by later standards.

We must remember that the artist was attempting

something entirely new to his experience, and that with the timidity of a beginner, he preferred to keep to certain fixed conventions; also that his chief instinct was as yet decorative and that he naturally treated his human figures much as he did his other ornaments, that is, he "geometrized" them into a fixed scheme. The absorbing interest of these pictures to us is that they stand at the head of a long line of representations in Greek ceramic art. Gradually, during



FIG. 2. VASE, ATHENIAN GEOMETRIC
EIGHTH CENTURY B.C.

the two or three following centuries the Greek artist solved all the problems which were too much for the maker of our vases; and these problems were then solved for the first time in the history of art.

The decorative patterns which occupy the surface of the vases not taken up by the figured representations, consist of rows of meander, zigzag lines, shaded triangles, chequers, lozenges, wheel-ornaments, wavy lines, etc. Ornaments are also everywhere introduced into the figured scenes to fill the empty spaces. Some of these ornaments have a long previous history, being derived from "Mycenaean" prototypes; others were invented by the geometric potter and have in their turn a subsequent history, forming part of the heritage taken up by the vase-painter of the classical period.

A detailed analysis of all these decorations would lead us too far here, and will have to be reserved for a full publication of these vases in an archaeological journal.

G. M. A. R.

THE LAST COMMUNION OF ST. JEROME

BY SANDRO BOTTICELLI¹

CONTINUED

ALREADY in the second half of the fourteenth century, the family of the Del Pugliese had arrived at opulence, and were possessed of a famous chapel in the church of the Carmine, painted by Starnina. Of these frescoes, which are no longer in existence, Vasari has left us an account which makes us deplore their loss. Although the Del Pugliese could thus early boast the possession of a chapel in one of the principal churches of Florence, they did not attain to the coveted honor of election to the office of Prior, until 1463. But here I must confine myself to speaking of the branch of the family descended from Francesco di Jacopo Del Pugliese. This Francesco di Jacopo was the father of two sons; Fil-

ippo born in 1426, and Piero born in 1430. Filippo, who was already dead in 1469, is memorable only as being the father by his wife, Monna Oretta, of Francesco, the future patron of Botticelli. Piero, who, with Francesco, is the subject of the present account, in turn had two sons by his wife, Monna Pippa, daughter of Jacopo di Uberto degli Arrighi; Filippo born in 1468, and Niccolò born in 1477. In 1469, Francesco, a boy of some ten or eleven years (he appears to have been born in 1458), was living with his uncle, Piero. He married Monna Alessandra, daughter of Messer Domenico Bonsi; but, like his cousins, Filippo and Niccolò, he died without leaving male issue; and in little more than a century from the date of Piero's birth, this branch of the Del Pugliese had flourished and become extinct.

Ugolino Verino, in his Latin poem, *De Illustratione Urbis Florentiae*, written not long before his death in 1503, celebrates the Del Pugliese as a family of merchants, who from their place of origin (a borough of Prato) settled in Florence, and became famous for their proficience in the "arte della lana," as the Florentine phrase went—the wool-stapler's craft.

"Ex nostro mercator agro Puliensis in Urbem
Venit, lanitique fuit celeberrimus arte."

Piero Del Pugliese, and at a later time his sons and nephew, had their "bottega," "a uso d'arte di lana," in the Convento Maggiore di San Martino. In Florence, certain localities in which the shops and factories were chiefly, if not entirely, given over to the craft and trade of the wool-stapler, were anciently called "conventi" from the great concourse of merchants, who used to assemble there, from all parts of Europe, in order to transact their business. The Convento Maggiore di San Martino was in the neighborhood of the so-called Birthplace of Dante. In the fifteenth century, the craft and traffic of the wool-stapler was at its zenith in Florence. Benedetto Dei records in his *Cronaca*, that in 1460, there were no less than 273 "botteghe" of the "arte della lana" in Florence; and the cloths which they manufactured, were exported to Rome, Naples, Sicily, and the

¹The following article, which was begun in the *March BULLETIN*, has been contributed by Herbert P. Horne, the distinguished architect and writer, whose book, *Sandro Botticelli*, was published in 1908.